

Seattle Board of Park Commissioners
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkboard/>
Meeting Minutes
July 27, 2006

Board of Park Commissioners:

Present:

Angela Belbeck
Jack Collins
Terry Holme
Kate Pflaumer, Chair
Jackie Ramels
Amit Ranade

Excused:

Debbie Jackson

Seattle Parks and Recreation Staff:

B.J. Brooks, Deputy Superintendent
Sandy Brooks, Coordinator

Commission Chair Pflaumer called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. **Commissioner Holme moved and Commissioner Ramels seconded approval of the Acknowledgment of Correspondence, the July 27 agenda, and the July 13 minutes, as corrected.**

Superintendent's Report

Deputy Superintendent Brooks reported that Superintendent Bounds had a sudden family illness and she was present to represent the Superintendent. She reported on the following items.

For more information on Seattle Parks and Recreation, please visit the web pages at <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/>.

City Council Audit of Seattle Parks' Public Involvement Policy: Claudia Gross Shader of the City Auditor's office has prepared and released an electronic survey of Seattle Parks' public involvement policy. There is a three-week comment period until August 21, with the Auditor's office collecting all the data. Ms. Gross Shader will brief Councilmember Della in late September with the survey results, and will meet with Commissioners Pflaumer and Ramels regarding the Park Board's public involvement policy role.

The Commissioners asked how many surveys are being sent out and Deputy Superintendent Brooks answered that City Council distributed a press release releasing the survey, and Seattle Parks has posted it on its website. In addition, Parks supplied Ms. Gross Shader with a list of 11,000 names of participants in Parks projects. In the first

hour after it was posted, 81 responses were received. Commissioner Holme asked that the survey accommodate those who do not have access to e-mail. Commissioners Pflaumer and Ramels will discuss this request with Ms. Gross Shader when they meet.

The survey is available at <http://www.zoomerang.com/recipient/survey-intro.zgi?p=WEB225J8ME96AC>

Langston Hughes Cultural Arts Center (CAC) All Teen Summer Musical: Langston Hughes CAC will celebrate ten years of the All Teen Summer Musical with a journey back in time to the very first production from 1996, “Summer Rhapsody Reunion.” For more information on this performance, and upcoming shows at Langston Hughes, see: <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/centers/langston/activity.htm>.

Successful Fundraising at Langston Hughes: Due to an unexpected shortfall in funds for the CAC’s popular Teen Summer Musical, the Langston Hughes staff went into emergency fundraising. Over the course of 1-1/2 months, the Center successfully raised \$20,000, including \$5,000 from the Tulalip Tribes, \$10,000 from the Associated Recreation Council, and \$5,000 from community donations. This year’s Teen Summer Musical will proceed as planned with nine performances during August at the Seattle Repertory Theatre.

Old-Timers Picnic: Registration for the annual Old-Timers Picnic, sponsored by Seattle Parks’ Senior Adult Programs, has reached its capacity of 1,700 registrants with an extensive waiting list. Both the picnic — scheduled for Tuesday, August 29, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., at Woodland Park Zoo — and zoo admission are free. For more information on the Senior Adult Programs, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/Seniors/index.htm>.

Alki Statue of Liberty: The local ABC, CBS, and NBC affiliates, along with The Seattle Post-Intelligencer and The Seattle Times, were on hand to record the removal of the small statue of Liberty at Alki Beach. This statue has been heavily vandalized since its installation in 1950. The Northwest Programs for the Arts is using Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) and community fundraising to fabricate a new one and to redesign the plaza. For more information on Alki Beach Park and the Statue of Liberty, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/AlkiBeachPark/history.htm>.

Starbuck’s Award: Starbuck’s recently awarded Seattle Parks project manager Andy Sheffer its “Involvement” Award for Powell Barnett Park. This award is normally only given internally to Starbuck’s employees but Starbuck’s wanted to acknowledge Andy’s great efforts on the “Extreme Park Makeover” Project at Powell Barnett. For more information on Powell Barnett Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/powellbarnett.htm>.

Parks Staff Member Honored: Patrick Merriam, Central West Crew Chief, received the 2006 Uptown Alliance Service Award at the “Uptown Sunday at Counterbalance Park” event on Sunday, July 23. The award was for the exceptional job that the Park’s Central West Crews have accomplished on Queen Anne Hill parks, specifically for revitalizing Kinnear Park. Seattle Parks awarded certificates to Zoe Vineyard, site volunteer coordinator for Friends of Kinnear Park and Church of Scientology Environmental Task Force for their five years of service to the park. For more information on Kinnear Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/kinnear.htm>.

Motorized Aircraft at Ferdinand Street Boat Launch: At the Board’s July 13 meeting, several members of the Lake Sawyer Hawks Model Airplane Club testified during Oral Communications, requesting the Board to intercede on its behalf regarding the revocation of the Club’s permit to launch motorized aircraft at the Ferdinand Street boat launch. The permit was revoked by Seattle Parks after several citizens complained of the noise, etc., from the aircraft. After listening to testimony and holding a brief discussion, the Board recommended that the Superintendent review all the testimony. Deputy Superintendent Brooks reported that the Superintendent [who was out of town at the July 13 meeting] has since listened to and read the testimony presented to the Board. He also talked to the crew chief for Southeast Seattle, whose crew maintains this park and have a regular presence there. The permit clearly states that the permit was experimental and that either side could terminate it with a 30-day notice. The Superintendent accepted the staff recommendation to deny extending the permit. [See tonight’s Old/New Business for additional discussion and action on this permit.]

Oral Requests and Communication from the Audience

The Chair explained that this portion of the agenda is reserved for topics that have not had, or are not scheduled for, a public hearing. Speakers are limited to three minutes each and will be timed. The Board's usual process is for 15 minutes of testimony to be heard at this time, with additional testimony heard after the regular agenda and just before Board of Park Commissioner's business. Six people testified. A brief summary of their testimony follows.

Maurice Cooper: He is the Madison Park Community Council President and referred to the Neighborhood Matching Fund project controversy at Madison Park. The Community Council has 21 elected members and he has been its president several times over the past 30 years. He thanked the NMF for awarding \$114,000 to the park; however, there is community controversy about the project. A small community group (Friends of Madison Park) applied for the NMF grant and did not go through the Community Council — which would have been the regular process. The Council does not want concrete added to this park, as proposed in the project. The park has existed for 114 years without it. Local television and newspapers have written articles about the controversy. He asked for the Board's support of the Community Council. For more information on Madison Park, see <http://www.seattle.gov/parks/parkspaces/madison.htm>.

Peggy Wilton: She has lived near Madison Park for the past 51 years and is thrilled that the Friends of Madison Park want to improve the park with a Neighborhood Matching Fund award. However, neighbors are concerned with the proposed removal of the alley of diseased cherry trees and she requested that as many trees as possible be left. There is widespread concern over the proposal to concrete a portion of the park and she asked that crushed rock be used instead. She also asked that the play tower be rebuilt.

Dick Weaver: He is a member of the Lake Sawyer Hawks Model Airplane Club and testified at the July 13 meeting. He gave additional testimony and asked that the Club's appeal to the Superintendent and Board not be dismissed without a fair hearing. [See Old/New business for further discussion and action on this request.]

Ted Moser: He, too, is a member of the Lake Sawyer Hawks Model Airplane Club and testified at the July 13 meeting. He read several positive comments from the Club's comment book. This book asks the public to write comments when the club is launching the aircraft at Ferdinand Street Boat Launch. He believes that the only negative comments that Seattle Parks has received is from the selfish nearby property owners. He stated that lawnmowers are also noisy, but they aren't banned.

Dean Brinton: He lives in SeaTac on a lake and flies his float plane there two-three times each week. He doesn't believe the planes have an impact on the environment, as the birds aren't concerned with the planes and even circle with them. The Club members follow safe, 100-year old guidelines for flying the motorized aircraft and they keep good records of who flies and when. He is puzzled why the Superintendent made a decision on the permit, before the Club had an opportunity to hear the complaints. Club members have only had an opportunity to talk with the Park Board and not Seattle Parks' staff.

Chris Grady for Cindy Trueman: He read written testimony prepared by Cindy Trueman, who was unable to testify. This testimony was in regards to a memorial park bench installation at West McGraw Street. He distributed copies of a *Magnolia News* article describing the neighborhood concerns over the benches, which are located at a busy intersection on Magnolia. Magnolia citizens have called the Superintendent two times about the benches and, so far, have received no response. He asked that Seattle Parks either postpone or abandon its plans to re-install these benches. To read the Magnolia News article, see: http://www.zwire.com/site/index.cfm?newsid=16943266&BRD=855&PAG=461&dept_id=517907&rfi=8.

Briefing/Public Hearing: Citizen Proposal for Modification of John C Little, Sr. Park Hours
Cheryl Fraser, Seattle Parks' Southeast Manager, and Larry Campbell, Seattle Parks' Security Supervisor, briefed the Board on a community-driven proposal to change the operating hours of John C. Little, Sr. Park. The Board received

both a written and verbal briefing, with both included in these minutes. The briefing was immediately followed by a public hearing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

The NewHolly community, Seattle Police, and the Seattle Housing Authority are proposing to change the current operating hours at John C. Little, Sr. Park from 4:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. to operating hours of 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The proposed operating hours, if approved, will be consistent with operating hours at Othello Park located approximately six blocks east of John C. Little, Sr. Park.

Background

The NewHolly community Block Watch team and the Seattle Housing Authority have requested a change in hours of operation for John C. Little, Sr. Park. They have based their requests on several key factors. One, the housing configuration adjacent to the park has dramatically changed with Seattle Housing Authority's redevelopment of the area over the past few years. This has resulted in increased density of housing and residents who live near the park. Secondly, Park users regularly use the basketball courts until at least 11:30 p.m., which has resulted in ongoing complaints from area residents. In addition, reports have been received regarding illegal drinking, fighting, and other inappropriate activity after dark within the park.

In June, Seattle Parks received two letters requesting that the operating hours at John C. Little, Sr. Park be modified. Gail-Marie Vielle, Blockwatch Captain for NewHolly, and Thomas Tierney, Executive Director, Seattle Housing Authority indicate that the activity in the park after 10:00 p.m. includes loud basketball play, drinking, and fighting.

Sergeant Steve Damon of the Police Department South Precinct reports that between July 1 and July 18 of this year, 16 police calls were received between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. pertaining to issues in this neighborhood park. Examples of the types of calls the Police Department has received include property damage to surrounding homes caused by rock-throwing juveniles inside the park. On June 27, 2006, a NewHolly security guard was assaulted by an alleged gang member in the park at midnight and suffered a broken jaw. The Parks-owned trailer positioned in the park was burglarized on July 13, 2006.

Seattle Police Department supports this request to change the park's operating hours, citing it will provide them with an additional tool to curtail illegal behavior before activity develops into something larger.

A review of Parks' incident reports also shows an increase in litter, property damage, drug use, or other illegal activities at John C. Little, Sr. Park.

Impacts

The beneficial impacts of this citizen proposal: Changing park operating hours would reduce noise and other disruptive activity adjacent to dwelling units at the NewHolly community. It would strengthen the public perception of the park being a safe place for park users. Police and Parks will continue to work with the neighbors through the change, creating a closer partnership.

The adverse impacts of this citizen proposal: The impacts of changing park operating hours include a loss of hours of public park usage after 10:00 p.m. and before 6:00 a.m. The primary user group impacted would be teenagers and young adults using the basketball facilities within the park.

Alternatives

One alternative is to implement a 90-day review period of John C Little, Sr. Park activities. The Police Department has agreed to conduct a 9-1-1 training with area residents and work with residents to develop a 90-day observation activity log to document the date, time, location, and level of the problems in the park. This review period would

begin with your approval and would continue for 90 days, after which time we would evaluate the collected information.

Summary

Continuous communication and cooperation between John C. Little, Sr. Park users, park neighbors, Police, and Parks staff is important and should continue. The general park operating hours (4:00 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.) were established to address illegal late night activities in all Seattle parks. The "Park Operating Hours Exception" policy provides a means to modify park hours if there is a real threat to public health or safety.

Verbal Briefing

Ms. Fraser and Mr. Campbell reviewed information from the written briefing and attachments sent to the Board prior to tonight's meeting.

Public Hearing

The public hearing began. The Chair reminded speakers that they have up to three minutes to speak and will be timed. Nine speakers signed in and testified. A very brief summary of their testimony is included below.

Mariana Quarnstrom: She is the Southeast Crime Prevention Council chair and asked that Seattle Parks consider closing John C. Little, Sr. Park from sunset to sunrise. The periods of darkness in the park are when most problems occur. She believes the problems will only escalate during hours the park is open if it is dark.

Ron Momoda: He is a resident of the Southeast area. He described the location of the park and stated that youth violence at that location is the #1 concern of the neighborhood. This is taking its toll on the neighbors as there have been recent assaults and robberies. He supports the staff recommendation of closing the park from 10:00 pm until 6:00 am.

Aun Neov: She is a six-year resident of NewHolly and supports the staff recommendation.

Chim Voptg: She is also a resident of NewHolly and supports the staff recommendation

Joy Bryngelson: She has worked at NewHolly for eight years with SHA to make the neighborhood safer. The neighbors perception is that the park is no longer safe and not being used as designed. A petition was collected with 50 neighbors signing support of the staff recommendation. The public looks forward to the recommendation being implemented.

Willard Brown: He is the president of the NewHolly Homeowner's Board Association. He described John C. Little, Sr. Park and Van Asselt Playfield as bookend parks of the NewHolly area. The current hours of operation are problematic for the neighborhood. Seattle Housing Authority has its parks close at 9:30 p.m. and the violence at their parks is minimal. He supports the staff recommendation so that all the parks in this corridor are closed by 10:00 pm.

Lt. James Koutsky: He is the Operating Officer for Seattle Police South Precinct. He commends Parks for its daytime programs at John C. Little, Sr. Park. He stated that it is not teens, but rather young adults, 19-23 years old, who are causing the nighttime problems at the park. His sense is that these youth drive to the park, rather than walk there. Two major incidents have occurred. In June, a security officer was attacked and had to be taken to the hospital. In the second incident, a community member was disturbed by loud noises in the park. When she confronted those involved, she was attacked. NewHolly is a great place and SPD strongly supports the change in hours of operation, as more problems occur in the park after dark.

Edwin Menjivar: He is the Seattle Housing Authority officer who was assaulted at the park in June. He is on patrol at night and stated that a 10:00 p.m. closure will work well in summer, but not in the winter. He asked that the closure be changed to either 9:00 or 9:30 p.m. and become permanent (not a 90-day trial.) NewHolly has come a long way and residents don't need the negative activity at this park.

Michael Mitchell: He is a resident of NewHolly and has been a Seattle Housing Authority security officer for two years. He has observed that the illegal activity increases in summer. He also stressed that it is young adults — not the teens — who are causing the problems. These young adults are using the park as a hangout and are not there for the park’s amenities. They bring beer and attract other negative people to the park. The woman that Lt. Koutsky referred to asked the noisy group to be quiet and a riot ensued, with her being punched in the face by one of the youth. This type of incident doesn’t happen every day, but it shouldn’t be happening at all.

The public hearing concluded.

Board Questions and Answers

There was some discussion about the Board’s next step on this issue. Its normal procedure is to have a full discussion and make a recommendation at its next meeting (in this instance, four weeks away) to allow additional testimony to be received. If substantial negative testimony is received, the Board can then revisit the issue. Due to the emergency nature of this request, it could also discuss the staff recommendation and vote tonight on a recommendation to the Superintendent. It was agreed that the Board would discuss and recommend on the 90 day emergency change in hours at this meeting.

Commissioner Holme has coached soccer at the park and noted that it is only two blocks from the South Police Precinct, with the park being out of the sight line of the precinct. Lt. Koutsky answered that many of the youth, who mostly drive to the park, may not realize that the Precinct is so near.

Commissioner Holme referred to the nearby outdoor basketball courts at Van Asselt Community Center that have been closed during that facility’s remodel. He asked if there has been a history of trouble at those courts. Ms. Fraser answered yes, the two basketball courts were at the north end of the community center. When the housing went in, complaints immediately began coming in regarding late night activity at the courts. Staff tried a number of strategies to try to curtail the problems, from taking out the lights to removing the nets. In the re-design, the basketball courts are being relocated to the south side of the community center. Commissioner Holme asked if, because the basketball courts at Van Asselt are not available, whether problems at the community center move to John C. Little, Sr. Park. Ms. Fraser answered that that John C. Little, Sr. Park was designed with the basketball players in mind. It isn’t the basketball, it is the late night activity that is the problem. Commissioner Holme asked if the park boundaries are well defined at John C. Little, Sr. Park and wondered if the hours are changed will it be apparent to the public entering from various sites into the park. Mr. Campbell answered that the park’s borders are well defined by the nearby streets. Ms. Fraser, Lt. Koutsky, and Mr. Campbell answered that appropriate signage will be installed very quickly that lists and hours and rules of behavior.

Commissioner Holme asked about the current nighttime lighting in the park and if it aids in park security. Mr. Campbell answered that there is some lighting for the sidewalks and for security purposes, but it is not adequate for playing basketball.

Commissioner Pflaumer asked if other hours were considered and Ms. Fraser answered that both Seattle Housing Authority and the Block Watch group requested the 10 pm to 6:00 am closure. Warm weather and longer days bring an increase in negative activity and the Department is reacting quickly to the community’s concerns. Commissioner Ranade asked if Seattle Housing Authority would object to the park being closed earlier than 10:00 p.m. Mr. John Forsyth of the Housing Authority answered that it requested 10:00 pm to match the closing hour at Othello Park. However, after listening to public testimony tonight, SHA would be interested in an earlier closing.

The Commissioners asked several questions about the variety of hours that both parks and parking lots are open in the Seattle Park system. To gain a clearer understanding of the operating hours, they asked for a future briefing/review of the hours of operation.

Commissioner Holme moved follow staff recommendation to change the hours on a 90-day emergency basis with the exception that if the Board receives any negative comments, it would revisit the recommendation. Commissioner Ranade seconded.

Discussion:

The Chair commented that the hours can be re-visited at any time. Commissioner Holme suggested that the hours of operation of the outdoor basketball courts at Van Asselt Community Center be reviewed to match the requested new hours of operation at John C. Little Park. Commissioners Ranade requested that an even earlier closing time be considered for this park and brought back to the Park Board for further consideration. Commissioner Collins suggested that Parks staff and SHA consider setting hours at Othello and John C. Little, Sr. parks and at the nearby Housing Authority parks to be the same. Commissioner Pflaumer commented that the earlier closure hours have been beneficial at Othello Park. Commissioner Belbeck commented that NewHolly is a new development and residents need sleep and to not be disturbed from noises at the basketball court. Commissioner Ramels commented that an earlier closure doesn't solve the problem, but just moves it to another location. Programming could help with the problem, but she recognizes the difficulty of capturing the interests of this 19-23 year old age group.

The vote was taken and was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The Commissioners thanked Ms. Fraser and Mr. Campbell for the briefing, as well as SPD staff.

Briefing: Neighborhood Matching Fund

Pamela Kliment, Seattle Parks' Neighborhood Matching Fund project manager, Garry Owens, Department of Neighborhoods Neighborhood Matching Fund project manager, and Doug Lorentzen, Chair of the Neighborhood Matching Fund's Citywide Review Team, gave a briefing and overall review of the Neighborhood Matching Fund. Commissioners received both a written and verbal briefing.

Written Briefing

Requested Board Action

None. This is a briefing only.

Project Description and Background

The Department of Neighborhoods (DON) administers the Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) program. The NMF provides funding to community groups that want to make improvements in their neighborhood by providing City monies for capital projects, events, and other activities. The community must match these funds with cash, in-kind donations, and labor. All NMF projects are community initiated and led. The program consists of two types of awards that involve Parks. The Small and Simple awards have a maximum award of \$15,000 and have four funding cycles per year. The Large Project Fund awards are up to \$100,000 and have one cycle per year. The Neighborhood Matching Fund, developed by Seattle's Department of Neighborhoods in the late 1980s, is a nationally recognized program that has since been established in cities and communities all over the world. Vancouver, B.C. has a similar program.

DON pays for a Park staff position staff to manage NMF projects in parks. There are typically two kinds of projects; design and construction projects with a consultant/contractor and all the "others." Typical "other" projects include events, habitat restoration, and individually purchased items (batting cage, etc.). The application review process described below applies to both kinds of projects. Handouts have been prepared to help communities.

When communities apply for funds, DON forwards applications to Parks for review and comment. Because of limited staff capacity and limited ability to absorb impacts on operations and maintenance, Parks has developed criteria to evaluate projects. Parks NMF staff organize the reviews, including working with resource managers, facilities division staff, and people with special knowledge such as the arborist or the property managers. Maintenance and operations costs are calculated. Recommendations are made to the department's Project Steering committee. The Superintendent reviews these recommendations and the results are sent to DON. While Parks

screens the applications, DON makes the awards and these are announced by the Mayor. As part of its review process, the Department of Neighborhoods and the Citywide Review Team review the large project applications. Review Team members are comprised of community council and district council representatives.

Once the project is awarded, the Parks NMF staff person also meets with the community to help them with the consultant selection process. The groups advertise, prepare a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), and interview consultants. Once a consultant is hired, a public meeting schedule is set up, a sign is put up on site, and a mailing is sent. The community group contracts with the consultant directly.

Design projects are reviewed by Parks' ProView and ProView Tech committees. The Parks NMF staff person shepherds the project through these reviews, attends the public meetings, and meets with the community steering committee on a regular basis.

When the design is complete, the consultant manages the bidding following the City's public works requirements. The community group contracts with the contractor directly. NMF staff manage the construction processes coordinating with construction inspectors, facilities, and ground staff as necessary.

Issues

NMF-funded projects differ from other parks projects. They are not chosen as the result of an extensive neighborhood planning effort or the planning associated with major maintenance projects. Whereas the Pro Parks Levy has a determined slate of projects, NMF projects are an unpredictable stream of projects. These are often projects in areas that need improvement; for example many play areas have been improved and brought up to code using the NMF. For this reason, the external outreach process and internal evaluation are very intensive.

Public Involvement Process

For each NMF project, Parks pays for a sign at the site and a large mailing in the neighborhood. This is required as part of our public involvement policy. Typically, the community does a lot more outreach like briefing local business associations and schools and making special presentations at churches and retirement homes. One group made yard signs. Community groups have distributed fliers in many imaginative ways, including in grocery bags at local groceries and with invoices at local stores. They create web sites — www.friendsofmadisonpark.org and www.boarders4parks.org are typical. Local papers, such as the Ballard Herald Tribune and The Queen Anne News, often give community projects a great deal of press.

Budget and Funding

In 2005, NMF had about \$3,500,000 available for projects. Park projects generally make up about 30-50 percent of the projects.

This grant program leverages other money. For example, since 2000, the King County Youth Sports Facility Grant program has awarded \$427,660 to Parks NMF projects and King County has also contributed to many environmental NMF projects. Since the start of the Starbucks Neighborhood Park Grant Program in 2000, Starbucks has awarded \$435,000 to NMF park projects in Seattle. Many corporate and family foundations make grants to park community projects; they often require that a group have an NMF award. They know that once the group has an award, the Department of Neighborhoods and other appropriate departments have approved it. Community groups have used many ways to raise money from individuals: bake sales, auctions, door-to-door fundraising, house parties, etc. The Dahl Playfield Improvement Project, for example, has 32 fund sources. Professional donations have been important; the civil engineer for Beer Sheva was a volunteer. Many groups have volunteer graphic designers help with fliers and other documents. These professionals can match the grant at their professional rate. Other community volunteers can put together play equipment, adding to the match and saving money on professional installation. They can also plant plants.

NMF funds have also leveraged Pro Parks Levy money. Since the Levy started in 2000, approximately 20 Pro Parks projects have used matching funds as part of the acquisition, design, and construction budgets. It is common for a

neighborhood project to start with an NMF Small and Simple for design and to use Pro Parks funding to help complete the project.

Schedule

There is one more Small and Simple funding cycle this year, in October, with previous cycles in January, April, and July. The Large Project Fund funds were just awarded and will be available to the community groups in September.

NMF Parks Projects

Since the inception of the NMF program in 1988, 474 projects in Seattle parks have been funded with awards totaling \$13.7 million.

In 2005, the NMF has funded design work for projects at Ravenna Park Dahl Playfield, Dahl Skatespot, Bayview Kinnear Park, Big Howe play area, Fremont Peak Park, Mt Baker Ridge Viewpoint, Pinehurst Pocket Park, Maple Leaf Community Garden, Dakota Place Park, and Montlake Park.

Completed projects included the Alki Whale Tail Play Area, a building at Marra Farm, habitat restoration at Llandover Woods and Hitts Hill, new artwork at Homer Harris Park, and doors and windows at the Cascade People's Center. This year, we completed a huge renovation at Powell Barnett Park, and projects at York Substation and I-5 Colonnade. The Montlake Summer Festival was also funded with NMF.

Additional Information

Pamela Kliment, Parks Neighborhood Matching Fund Planner, 684-7556; Pamela.Kliment@seattle.gov

Verbal Briefing

Ms. Kliment gave a brief overview of the written briefing. She described park-related Neighborhood Matching Fund projects as having two major themes. One is the "seen" benefit such as improved play areas, pocket parks, and habitat. The "unseen" benefit is that new relationships are forged between citizens and the City and its staff and the citizens take ownership of their projects.

Mr. Owens gave more history of the development of the Neighborhood Matching Fund. He stated that the essence of building community is that actions must be intentional and not accidental. In 1988, Mayor Royer approved an effort to give citizens more access to City services. Seven staff were hired and the Department of Neighborhoods was created. Mayor Royer had a great deal of respect for neighborhood power and his successor, Mayor Rice, accelerated the effort. When Mayor Schell was in office he tripled the Matching Fund, in part to assist with the extensive neighborhood planning efforts going on all over Seattle. Mayor Nickels took the NMF in a new direction, with a focus on his Race and Social Justice Initiative; the NMF funded a three-year pilot project on the Initiative. All of these expansions created both opportunities and challenges for the community and staff. In more recent years, City Council set a cap of \$100,000 for any one project and reduced the Small and Simple application rounds from six to four annually, with a project cap of \$15,000.

The Neighborhood Matching Fund is now being used as a catalyst for all sorts of ideas in areas such as Beacon Hill, Georgetown, Lake City, and Southeast Seattle, and to serve senior citizens, youth, low-income people, renters, and ethnic groups.

A high point for the Neighborhood Matching Fund was being named by the Kennedy Foundation as one of the most innovative public programs in the country. It has been replicated in over 100 cities in the United States and in cities around the world, including Paris, France; Capetown, South Africa; Havana, Cuba; a city in Brazil; and Vancouver, B.C. Recent inquiries about the program have come from Japan and Haiti. A low point was in 2003, when the NMF funds were frozen for nine months. Once the funds were unfrozen, the program resumed at full speed.

The Neighborhood Matching Fund program's relationship with Seattle Parks is very good. Mr. Owens pointed to a large map with numerous green dots showing all the NMF parks projects awarded and completed all over the city.

He will be the NMF project manager for the Madison Park NMF project, which the Board has heard a briefing and received testimony about. This is an inter-generational project, with some community controversy. The goal is to not delay the project, but to keep the community working together on it.

Doug Lorentzen, citizen volunteer, was introduced as the Chair of the Citywide Review Team. He has chaired four rounds of the reviews during the past ten years and stated that during that time, the Department of Neighborhoods, Mayor, or City Council have never altered the recommendations of the Review Team.

Ms. Kliment next showed a Powerpoint presentation with photos of the many NMF projects either completed or being completed in Seattle's parks, and pointed out artwork and many special elements of these projects.

Board Questions & Answers

Commissioner Holme referred to the professional match and asked if the City has a defined group of designers that are used on the NMF projects. Ms. Kliment and Mr. Owens answered that, for NMF match purposes, a designer must have their own business and document that they make their living from the business. Documentation must be on the businesses' letterhead, and include their standard hourly rate and how many hours they will donate to the project.

Commissioner Holme NMF referred to the statement in the briefing paper that the Pro Parks Levy Fund has used NMF funds as part of acquisition and asked for some examples. Ms. Kliment answered that no acquisitions are currently being funded. Previously, Fremont Peak Park and Junction Plaza both were at least partially funded by Neighborhood Matching Funds.

Commissioner Pflaumer stressed that more public outreach on NMF projects should be evaluated. While it may appear that the entire community is behind a project, this may not always be the case.

Commissioner Ramels stated that this has been a fascinating presentation. Even though she has been involved in her community for many years, she did not realize exactly how the NMF works. It was very interesting to learn much more about it.

The remaining portion of this briefing focused on the Neighborhood Matching Fund project at Madison Park:
Concrete: Commissioner Pflaumer asked if less concrete at Madison Park is feasible and Ms. Kliment answered that the addition of some concreted areas was popular at the public meetings. Participants wanted concrete areas to push baby strollers and wheelchairs and for kids to use sidewalk chalk. In addition, concrete requires less maintenance from staff. Commissioner Collins suggested permeable concrete be used. Commissioner Pflaumer commented that she has strong concerns that runoff from the concrete will impact nearby waterways and Commissioner Collins shares this concern. Commissioner Belbeck noted that Cal Anderson Park has a pathway that is ¼- gravel and asked how that compared in cost to permeable concrete. Ms. Kliment answered that almost everything is less expensive than permeable concrete.

Commissioner Collins believes that another part of the controversy is a bureaucratic, as well as an inter-generational, issue within the community. Mr. Owens commented that the concrete controversy is a reflection of a larger issue — with some community members favoring a passive park and others favoring one with play and sports areas. Each time he has visited Madison Park, there are people playing different sports (tennis, flying kites, etc.) At one of the public meetings, he had several young neighborhood men voice support for a basketball court. They stated they love to play basketball, but must go to another area to do so. It is important to remember that this is a public park and an effort should be made to put in those amenities that draw people into the parks.

Commissioner Pflaumer recommended that staff help find a compromise within the community. The Commissioners thanked Ms. Kliment, Mr. Owens, and Mr. Lorentzen for the presentation.

Old Business/New Business

Central Waterfront: It was agreed that the Chair would not issue a press release soliciting comments on the Draft EIS. The final EIS will be brought to the Board at its October 26 meeting. All four alternatives will be presented to the Board and their recommendation may/may not be the preferred alternative. Commissioner Pflaumer stated that the Mayor's press release is confusing for the Board. Deputy Superintendent Brooks clarified that the Park's Department portion of the Plan includes the central waterfront area from the Olympic Sculpture Park to the north portion to Colman Dock on the southern section.

Public Involvement Policy: Commissioners Pflaumer and Ramels have agreed to work with the City Auditor on the public involvement policy. Parks staff will brief the Board at the August 24 meeting and the Board plans to act on the recommendations brought forth in the briefing.

Ethnics Proposal: Regina Labelle, Counsel to Mayor Nickels, sent the Park Board Chair a copy of the Mayor's Ethics policy. The Board agreed that the Chair will draft a letter of response and send to Ms. Labelle.

Magnuson Park: During the Superintendent's July 27 report to the Park Board, a reference was made regarding Seattle Prep moving its focus from Montlake Playfield to Magnuson Park for a site to hold games. The Board has concerns with this development and asked for a briefing. Deputy Superintendent Brooks agreed.

Motorized Aircraft: Commissioner Collins commented that the Lake Sawyers Model Airplane Club still wants the Superintendent to meet with them to discuss the permit. Deputy Superintendent Brooks commented that much effort has already gone into a review of this permit. The Superintendent reviewed the written testimony, listened to the verbal testimony from the July 13 meeting, and called the crew chief for that area who told him that nearby neighbors have complained about the aircraft. Eric Friedli, Director of the Enterprise Division, Charles Ng, Concessions and Grants Manager, and Sandi Bell, Southeast crew chief, met with representatives of the club. Since the July 13 meeting, Parks staff went back to Ferdinand Street Boat Dock and looked at the signs. Parks staff suggested Magnuson Park as an alternate site, as neighbors of the current site are the ones complaining. Staff also learned that King County will not issue any permits for these craft.

Board Discussion:

- Commissioner Ramels commented that this group appears harmless and is an age group that isn't seen in the parks as much as other groups.
- Commissioner Pflaumer commented that other parks have noisy recreational uses and the neighbors have to endure the noise. The Club agreed to a pilot program and to only fly the aircraft one time each week. In addition, the signage referring to the motorized aircraft was poor. She has a problem with how this was handled and believes a public hearing is called for.
- Commissioner Ranade agreed with the Chair and supports a public hearing.
- Commissioner Collins commented that the motorized aircraft permit does not entail broad Seattle Parks policy and wondered how the Superintendent will react to the Board addressing this issue.
- Commissioner Holme commented that he walks the area where the aircraft are launched and believes it is an environmentally sensitive area with eagles, falcons, and herons. He requested input from Seattle Parks' naturalists on the effect the motorized aircraft has on these birds. He recommended that this information be gathered and alternate sites, which may have a lessened impact from the aircraft, be looked at before a public hearing is scheduled.
- The Chair commented that the benefit of having a public hearing is that the audience will hear the staff briefing and interested parties can comment for/against. This is different from testifying during Oral Communications. She believes the aircraft club will be more satisfied with a public process than they have been with testifying at Oral Communications.

Board Determination: The Board agreed to hold a briefing, immediately followed by a public hearing, at its September 14 meeting. At its September 28 meeting, the Board will discuss and make a recommendation to the Superintendent.

Benches @ W. McGraw Street: Testimony was heard tonight under Oral Communications of neighborhood controversy regarding installation of these memorial benches. The Seattle Parks Foundation approves memorial benches and when the benches were originally installed, there did not appear to be any controversy. Due to a siting error, the benches were briefly removed and are now being re-installed. The controversy seemed to start with the re-installation. The Deputy Superintendent will look further into this and send the Board additional information.

Orchard Street Ravine Project: The Board asked that Parks staff keep it updated on the feasibility study for this project.

SR520 Widening Project: Commissioner Collins will be out of town when the Mayor's Taskforce holds its next meeting. Commissioner Belbeck will attend as his substitute.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

APPROVED: _____
Terry Holme, Acting Chair
Board of Park Commissioners

DATE _____